

(CONTINUED FROM THE 10TH PAGE.)  
 His way lay in an exactly opposite direction.  
 He had gone a quarter-of-a-mile, perhaps, when he met Major Hommersley, walking very fast.  
 He simply nodded to Brooke with a genial 'Good afternoon,' and hurried on.  
 'Was she waiting for him? thought the young man, and there was quite a sharp pain at his heart.  
 Danby Croft was lighted up from garret to basement.  
 It was the Twelfth of February, the night on which Mrs. Montfort was giving her grand ball.  
 Brooke was among the earliest arrivals. He had now been a week in Somerset, and it was five days since he had seen Annette—on that afternoon when she had plainly shown him she would rather walk home alone than in his company.  
 The very next morning he had called at Danby Croft; but Annet was out walking with Major Hommersley. Estelle had told him, with a significant smile. The major was one of the first people he saw when he entered Mrs. Montfort's drawing-room to-night.  
 'Ah! Mr. Brooke, glad to meet you,' was his genial greeting. 'You've driven over, of course? A nasty drive in that sleety wind; but Clarkson keeps good cattle, and you young fellows know how to make them step out.'  
 'Yes, we came very well,' assented Brooke, absently.  
 He was 'taking stock' of the major, and trying to decide whether it was possible that a girl like Annette could care for him. He came to the conclusion that it was. Whatever his age, John Hommersley was an attractive man, the very stamp of man that a woman is prone to lean upon.  
 His alert, natty figure, his bright, dark eyes, his genial smile, and cheery air, more than atoned for his years, his grizzled locks and his sun-burned skin.  
 Then, he had served in Africa with distinction, and had received the Victoria Cross.  
 'I can't fancy a girl like Annette falling in love with so old a man,' mused Denzil Brooke. 'But she certainly might care for him enough to marry him. I really couldn't blame her. He's a decent fellow—I'm quite sure of that.'  
 Estelle glided towards him, a dream of beauty, in a gown the color of a pale pink rose leaf, and almost as delicate in texture.  
 She had been quick to see there was a change in Brooke's manner.  
 He was very courteous, almost chivalrously so; but he was grave and gentle rather than playfully tender, as he had once—for a short period—been.  
 He was honestly grieved to think he might, in ever so slight a measure, have misled her, and would have done anything in his power to serve her, were such service possible.  
 Of course, he danced with her, and, equally of course, he put his name down for another dance later in the evening.  
 He wouldn't have been content with two dances, if that horrid little wretch hadn't thrust herself in between us! was her bitter thought. 'But never mind; she hasn't got him yet.'  
 It was some time before Brooke saw Annette.  
 The rooms were crowded, and she kept herself in the background.  
 When he did see her he told himself that Estelle's dark beauty, however it excited his admiration, could never have touched his heart.  
 Annette—and Annette only—could do that.  
 He knew what love was now.  
 The revelation came upon him with something of a shock.  
 Even in that crowded ball room his pulses were thrilling and tingling, his heart beating madly at the bare sight of Annette.  
 There was a certain air of restraint in his manner when Brooke spoke to her, but her smile was sweet.  
 He danced with her, and a thrill of rapture tingled to his very finger tips when his arm pressed her waist.  
 'I will win her!' he said to himself. 'Yes, in spite of his age. That can't have gone far. She hasn't known him long enough. It will have to be a quick wooing, though. The fortress must be carried by assault. It's St. Valentine's Day on Thursday. I'll send her a valentine, one way or another, I'll settle it then.'  
 'Do come into the conservatory,' he said, when the dance came to an end.  
 His voice was beseeching.  
 His eyes were more beseeching still.  
 After a moment of hesitation she passed into the conservatory with him.  
 Two or three other couples were there already; but Brooke found a secluded corner, and, having seated Annette, stood beside her, indulging in the luxury of gazing on her lovely face.  
 'I wonder why you didn't want to speak about our railway adventure the other night, Miss Stanley?' he said. Her fair cheek was tinged with a delicate blush.  
 'It seemed like making a fuss to talk about it. It wasn't much of an accident, you know. And I didn't want my cousins to hear I was so stupid as to faint.'  
 'By Jove! I don't think it was stupid at all. I think—'  
 'It was charming of you!' was what he was going to say; but he remembered it might sound rather ambiguous, and pulled himself up in time.  
 'They've got some nice people here,' he said after a pause. 'Major Hommersley seems a particularly jolly old fellow—don't you think so?'  
 'I'm not sure that I know what you mean by jolly,' said Annette, with a mischievous little smile just dimpling her lovely mouth. 'But I think he is very gentlemanly and kind.'  
 'You didn't know him before you came here?'  
 'Oh, no. I hadn't even heard of him. I suppose I ought to have done, as he is a

V. C. But I never had.'  
 'Oh, I'd heard of him lots of times, but never met him,' said Brooke carelessly.  
 After a moment, he added—  
 'A wonderfully gallant man for his age. It quite amuses me to watch his attentions to you.'  
 Annette looked up with a sudden start. Sweet and gentle though she ordinarily was, there was a distinct look of displeasure in her eyes.  
 'I scarcely understand you,' she said very coldly. 'Let us go back to the ball-room if you please.'  
 Hard To Bear.  
 Mr Larkin sat heavily down in his arm chair on the south porch and looked at his sister with an expression of patient but aggrieved endurance.  
 'I've got the window set into Jim Hosmer's shed,' he remarked, mournfully, 'and it's a mercy I didn't catch a sunstroke up on that roof. I don't know what saved me I'm sure. I'm being spared for some other end, I guess.'  
 'If you'd finished up the window yesterday, when it was so cool and cloudy, it would have been fun as well,' said Miss Larkin placidly rocking in a chair that stood well in the shadow.  
 'Now we won't have any more of that kind of talk! said her brother, in the tone of one who has borne all and reached the limit of his endurance. 'It seems as if you hadn't got any more of a conception of what I've undergone than Jim Hosmer himself.'  
 Why, that little nephew of his, Bobby Ingalls, has been out close by me almost all the time these three days while I have been working on that window, and I have had to keep drawing him off into the shade somewhere all day to day for fear he'd take hurt from the power of the sun.  
 And last off I let him play with the putty little mite, and I was just sitting under a tree with him, and we had put the window over our heads balanced on two benches, and were saying how 'twould be if we were plants in one of these conservatories, when along came Miss Hosmer and Jim.  
 They took the boy off into the house; leastways she did, and he began to talk to me about how long I had been making a simple window, and so on, and how that Miss Hosmer was making complaints of the flies in the shed, going in through the window hole.  
 'I said nothing in reply,' and Mr. Larkin had the look of a noble martyr, 'but I climbed right up window and all, on to that roof and finished my work and came home. Thanks I, 'Justice is too lacking in some folks it's no use to bandy words with 'em.' There was I paid by the job, making no charge for time all wore out entertaining that young one, drove up onto a blazing hot roof without a word of praise, just because a matter of half a dozen flies had worked in through a window hole, when I'd been outdoor with a swarm of 'em settling on me for the better part of three days!  
 'Folks have different ideas of justice,' said Miss Larkin with a curious smile.  
 'Tis so, now ain't it?' said her unconscious brother. 'That's what kind of support me through the job. Thanks I, it's Jim Hosmer's ideas that's at fault, and I suppose he can't change the whole trend of 'em at his age.'  
 Wisest Course.  
 An absent-minded professor of languages who is so fortunate as to have a painstaking and methodical wife, has grown accustomed to depend upon her for the wise ordering of the little practical details of life. Occasionally, however, he makes a visit to her mother, and the professor has to shift for himself, sometimes with rather doubtful success.  
 During one of these visits the professor was invited to attend a reception to a famous man who was visiting the town. He decided to accept.  
 It was early in the autumn, and his dress suit had been safely packed during the summer, but after a half hour spent in rummaging in his closet he found the right package, and in haste and triumph donned his evening clothes.  
 As he did so he began to sneeze, and the thought passed through his mind that the clothes were lighter in weight than those he had been wearing, and that he would probably take cold.  
 'I don't care if I do!' he said, stoutly, and still sneezing, he hurried off.  
 When he entered the warm reception hall he noticed a strange and almost overpowering odor of something—he could not tell what. It troubled him a little, and he was also a trifle disturbed to notice that all the people with whom he talked appeared to be suppressing sneezes.  
 'This hall is full of drafts,' he thought

uneasily. 'What if I should have pneumonia?'  
 At last an old lady approached who has a reputation for uncompromising frankness.  
 Anthony Hope and His Mother.  
 An American author who has recently returned from London, where he came much in contact with Mr. Anthony Hope Hawkins, tells this anecdote illustrating one of the most confining personal traits of the famous novelist.  
 Mr. Hawkins has private apartments in Buckingham street, next door to the house in which William Black lived for many years. This place is about a mile from the parish house occupied by the author's father, who is a rector of the Established Church. The constant coming and going of parishioners at the old home made it impossible for the novelist to enjoy the privacy and immunity from interruption necessary to the prosecution of his literary labors, and compelled him to find a working-place away from his parents house.  
 He had just entered into the full enjoyment of this arrangement when he discovered that his absence from the family room was a source of keen anxiety to his mother who could not bring herself to relinquish her motherly solicitude for the comfort of her son. She was in constant fear that he was not properly cared for, and spent many wakeful hours at night worrying over him.  
 Immediately on learning of her anxiety the son asked permission to spend his nights in his old room under the family roof, using his apartments in Buckingham street simply as a place in which to do his work. Every night, and often as great inconvenience, he returns to the parish house, solely to insure the peace of mind of his mother, who is now well advanced in years.  
 A Fox's Revenge.  
 A gentleman out shooting one day came to a river, where he saw six geese beyond shot. He determined to wait for them to approach the shore. While sitting there he saw a fox come down to the shore and stand some time and observe the geese. At length he turned and went into the woods and came out with a very large bunch of moss in his mouth. He then entered the water very silently, sank himself, and then, keeping the moss above the water, himself concealed, he floated among the geese. Suddenly one of them was drawn under the water, and the fox soon appeared on the shore with the goose on his back. He ascended the bank, and found a hole made by the tearing up of a tree. This hole he cleared, placed in it the goose, and covered it with great care, strewing leaves over it. The fox then left; and while he was away the hunter unburied the goose, closed the hole and resolved to wait the issue. In about an hour the fox returned with another fox in company. They went directly to the place where the goose had been buried, and threw out the earth. The goose could not be found. They stood regarding each other for some time, when suddenly the second fox attacked the other most furiously, as if offended by the trick of his friend. During the battle the hunter shot them both.  
 Wit and Wisdom From New Books.  
 'When the lights are out,' he said; 'when forever and a night the actor bids the stage farewell; when stripped of mask and tinsel, he goes home to that Auditor who set him his part; then perhaps he will be told what manner of man he is. The glass that now he dresses before tells him not; but he thinks a true glass would show a shrunken figure.'—'Audrey.'  
 It is a miserable thing to linger on the threshold. The daring spirits pass across and close the door.—'Sister Teresa.'  
 The devil possesses no one who does not desire him.—'Sister Teresa.'  
 Men are born to hardship. It is the alloy which gives firmness to their metal.—'When the Land was Young.'  
 The over-exercise of a critical faculty is always dangerous, and by too much judging of port Benjamin ruined his career.—'The Seal of Silence.'  
 Professional saints are very tiresome people. Amateur sinners are much more interesting.—'Casting of Nets.'  
 To learn the worth of a man's religion, do business with him.—'Aphorisms and Reflections.'  
 Rules of grammar cannot give us a mastery of language, rules of rhetoric cannot make us eloquent, rules of conduct cannot make us good.—'Aphorisms and Reflections.'  
 Overreached Himself.  
 The outspoken and disagreeable traveler does not always have it his own way. The Railroad Gazette gives an instance in which the rudeness of such a man very quickly wrought his complete discomfiture. The man turned to another passenger, who was sitting by an open window, and

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said:  
 'Excuse me, sir, but that open window is very annoying.'  
 'I'm sorry,' said the other man cheerfully, but I'm afraid you'll have to grin and bear it.  
 I wish you'd close it.  
 I should like to accommodate you but I'm afraid I can't.  
 Do you refuse to close that window, sir? I certainly do.  
 If you don't close it, I will.  
 'I bet you won't!'  
 'I'll go over there I will.'  
 'I'll give you odds you won't.'  
 'I ask you once more, sir, will you close that window?'  
 'No, sir, I will not!'  
 The insistent passenger gets on his feet. He looks threatening.  
 'I'd like to see you do it.'  
 He places his hands on the objectionable window.  
 'I'll show you whether I will or no,' sir! Then he tugs at the window.  
 'Why don't you close it?'  
 The discomfited passenger gets red in

the face.  
 'It—it appears to be struck!'  
 'O course it is! I tried to close it before you came in.'  
 A poet may be a good companion, but, so far as I know, he is even the worst of fathers.—'Dri and I.'  
 Altruism is a privilege rather than a duty.—'The Symphony of Life.'  
 Heaven and hell are very real, but they are states of mind.—'The Symphony of Life.'  
 When the law sets out to punish, it doesn't stop with the guilty only.—'The Manager of the B. and A.'  
 They took his humor for flippancy because their own flippancy was devoid of humor.—'Men and Books.'  
 He—The joke was, both these girls were hopelessly in love with me, and I made them madly jealous of each other.  
 She—I wonder you had the face to do it, Mr. Sparkis!—Punch.

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